

national problems. Its debates were often acrimonious. Accusations of dishonesty and graft made from the floor against other members, the government, or its ministers were not an infrequent feature. Before the first wartime election one could speak of the Majlis as one compact group undivided into political parties. Dr. Millspaugh, in his *Americans in Persia*, refers constantly to the parliament as one body without differentiating between parties, although a new parliament was elected in 1943-1944. To be sure, groups and factions existed, but they were of a rather personal character, with no concrete programs and ideology to render them fully distinct from one another. Fluidity characterized these groups, and yet to the outside world the parliament could be presented as an almost indivisible entity.

The Majlis proved too slow and inefficient to contribute actively to foreign or domestic policy. Yet it had the power to confirm or to reject important government measures and, occasionally, did come forth with significant initiative. A few examples of action by the Majlis can be cited. When the government invited the American financial mission in 1942, the Majlis confirmed the invitation. It also passed the law confirming the contract and the powers of the head of the mission as well as the engagement of further personnel. When the mission arrived, its difficulties were largely due to the hostility of the parliament. The role of the Majlis was also of importance in the question of oil concessions during and after the war. It was the parliament that in 1944 imposed limitations on the government's right to negotiate oil concessions, and again in 1947 ^ was the parlia-

ment that refused to ratify an oil agreement with the Soviet Union. One should mention finally the role that the Majlis played at the time of cabinet crisis. Not only was the deputies' vote decisive but the selection of a new prime minister came to be the Majlis' privilege. In this respect, the Majlis differed not only from the American Congress, but also from its original model, the western European parliament, which may confirm or reject the premier, but which usually leaves the choice to the head of the state. In the Majlis as much as two weeks were sometimes spent in debate as to who should be recommended to the Shah as prime minister. In view of the close connection between the making or unmaking of the cabinets and the